

Developing a Media Advisory

One step toward the success of your **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** activities is attracting media attendance at your events. This will enable your organization to tell the story of **Recovery Month** to the media, and showcase the importance of the campaign to raise interest in the issues surrounding substance use disorders.

A media advisory is the primary tool for informing reporters of your upcoming events and why they should attend. It is a glimpse of the event and will compel them to write the date down in their calendars so they can learn more by attending the event. The format of a media advisory is short—no longer than one page. The focus should be on why this event is taking place, who the key participants of the event are, when it takes place, where it is, and contact information for further inquiries.

Media Advisories: Short and Simple

When crafting a media advisory to promote your **Recovery Month** events, follow these suggestions:

- **Keep it short**—no more than one page. This will be an easy format for reporters to read and take away the most relevant information.
- **Start with one-sentence summary** of your event, preferably in the title. It should be concise and convey why your event is taking place, why the issues covered are relevant to your community, and why it is newsworthy.
- **Follow with all the details of the event:** what it is, where it is taking place, the day and time it will begin, and who is participating. Here, make note of local celebrities who are speaking or appearing. This information may attract more media attention.
- **Remember to include** a contact name, telephone number, and an e-mail address that reporters can use to ask questions before or after the event.

Resources to help you write your media advisory include:

- **The media advisory template** at the end of this document, which can be adapted to fit your needs. Make sure you edit the placeholders in the brackets as necessary. Electronic versions of these materials and other templates are available on the **Recovery Month** Web site, www.recoverymonth.gov.
- **Local information**, which you can obtain by contacting the Single-State Agency (SSA) in your state. Refer to the SSA Directory in the “Resources” section of this planning toolkit. Additionally, state-specific treatment information can be found in the **Treatment Episode Data Set** at www.dasis.samhsa.gov/webt/NewMapv1.htm, as well as from the **National Survey on Substance Abuse Treatment Services**. Information on treatment facilities in your area can be found at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov.
- **The 2005 National Survey of Drug Use and Health: National Findings**, published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which is another important source of state-related information. This survey can be found online through SAMHSA's Web site at www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm.

Tips for Distributing a Media Advisory

“Daybooks” = Daily listings of all activities that media are invited to attend; not available to the general public.

“Week-ahead” Columns = Listings published in local newspapers and business publications, thus reaching a wider audience.

Place your media advisory in “daybooks” and “week-ahead” columns to attract more media attention.

To find these opportunities, use search engines on the Internet to look up newswire services, such as Reuters and Associated Press. Call the bureau closest to your city or state and ask for the name and contact information for the daybook editor (including fax number). Use this information to submit your media advisory, asking to place your information on the newswire’s daybook the week before, the day before, and the day of the event. Some national media services, such as PR Newswire, charge for their services, so inquire before posting.

Also, calling or e-mailing the reporters or editors of local newspapers and business publications that feature upcoming events in the community is a great way to request placement of your advisory in their week-ahead columns or calendar listings. This will bring your events to the attention of community members and will encourage them to attend, in addition to the media.

Create a media list that will help you organize information about reporters.

A media list also will be useful when distributing a news release, which will contain more information about your *Recovery Month* events. For more information on news releases, see the template included in this planning toolkit. The following will take you, step-by-step, through creating a comprehensive media list:

Media List = A useful tool that will help you develop and keep an accurate, up-to-date, organized list of reporters whom you wish to contact. The list should include the name of the outlet, contact names, phone numbers, addresses, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses.

- Use the media directories at your local library or bookstore (Bacon’s directories, the *Yellow Book*, and Gebbie’s *All-In-One Directory* are examples).
- Look for information on daily and weekly newspapers, local television affiliates, radio stations, newswire services, Internet news outlets, magazines, newsletters, and business trade publications in your area.
- Using all the information you have gathered from directories and telephone calls, compile an actual list to keep all your notes in one place.
- Make sure to include specialized media, such as African-American, Hispanic/Latino, or other minority newspapers or radio stations.

Other outlets to consider including are:

- University/college newspapers
- Television, cable, and radio stations
- Small community papers or neighborhood newsletters
- Publications produced by local organizations, such as businesses, hospitals, women's centers, health care clinics, professional associations, mental health organizations, church and other faith-based institutions, grocery and drug stores, and local civic clubs

Once you have compiled your list of media outlets, call them to verify their contact information and determine which editors or reporters, such as health care reporters, are most likely to be interested in attending your ***Recovery Month*** event. Other important information to ask is each reporter's preferences about what time of day and how far in advance of the event to be called, as well as the method of contact preferred; today, most reporters prefer e-mail.

Make follow-up calls. After you e-mail or fax your media advisory, call the reporters to follow up and determine their interest in attending and/or covering your event. Being persistent can make a difference in generating media interest. However, remember to respect the reporter's time by being concise. Practicing what you will say before you call and preparing in case the reporter answers your call or it goes to voicemail will help you feel more comfortable.

Share Your Activities and Successes

You are encouraged to share your plans and activities for ***Recovery Month 2007*** with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), your colleagues, and the general public by posting them on the official ***Recovery Month*** Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov. By sharing your planning and activities, you are helping to generate momentum, thereby increasing outreach efforts to touch millions of lives that are affected by substance use disorders.

You also can share community success stories and other outreach efforts during ***Recovery Month*** by completing the Customer Satisfaction Form in this planning toolkit. Instructions are included on the form.

Please send samples of your organization's ***Recovery Month*** promotional materials to: Office of the Director, Consumer Affairs, SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 1 Choke Cherry Road, Second Floor, Rockville, MD 20857.

Sample ***Recovery Month*** materials are available electronically at the ***Recovery Month*** Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov. For additional ***Recovery Month*** materials, visit the Web site or call 1-800-662-HELP. For additional information about substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery, please visit SAMHSA's Web site at www.samhsa.gov.

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

media outreach

[Please adapt as needed for your event.]

[Date]

Media Advisory

[Name of Organization] to Hold Roundtable on the Cost Savings Associated with Treating Substance Use Disorders and to Celebrate People in Recovery

An estimated [number] people in [state/community] are affected by substance use disorders, which can take an enormous toll on productivity in the workforce and on the lives and families of people with these disorders. Treatment is cost effective, with some measurements showing a benefit-to-cost ratio of up to 7:1. With treatment costing \$1,583 per person on average, there is a monetary benefit to society of nearly \$11,487 for each person treated.

To further address the need for treatment for substance use disorders, [organization name] will host a community roundtable on [date] to discuss the need for people with substance use disorders to seek treatment, as well as to offer support for affected family members, so they and their communities can prosper. For many people, financial implications are a barrier to receiving treatment. Combined data from 2004 and 2005 state that among people who needed treatment for a substance use disorder, didn't receive it at a specialty facility, and felt they needed it, 35 percent said they did not receive it because of cost and insurance barriers.

The roundtable is part of the 18th annual observance of *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* and will address this year's theme, *"Join the Voices for Recovery: Saving Lives, Saving Dollars."* *Recovery Month* is a nationwide celebration of people in recovery from substance use disorders and the treatment providers who help them reclaim their lives and reintegrate into the community. Discussions on how to address the costs and benefits of treatment and recovery will be the main focus.

WHO: [participants]

WHEN: [date and time]

WHERE: [address of location]

CONTACT: [name and phone number of primary contact for event]

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